

REMARKS

Claims 1-2, 4-12 and 14-21 are pending in this application. Claim 20 has been canceled without prejudice by the present Amendment.

ALLOWED CLAIMS

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's allowance of claims 1-2, 4-12, 14-19 and 21.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

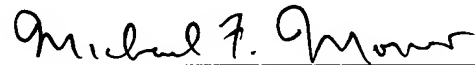
In response to the rejection of claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,799,256 ("Van Buskirk"), although Applicant respectfully disagrees with Examiner's rejection, Applicant has canceled claim 20 to place the application in condition for allowance.

Applicant notes that Van Buskirk fails to disclose a current providing unit for providing a first reference current and a second reference current to the first reference memory cells and the second reference memory cells respectively, in response to a reference voltage, as recited in claim 20. The Examiner notes Fig. 5 of Van Buskirk as showing current flowing from reference cells 94 and 96. However, Applicants respectfully submit that from this disclosure in Van Buskirk, it does not follow that Van Buskirk teaches the claimed current providing unit for providing first and second reference currents to respective first and second reference memory cells. Indeed, such a conclusion is the result of hindsight reasoning gleaned from Applicant's disclosure.

Nevertheless, Applicant has canceled claim 20 to place the application in condition for allowance.

An early and favorable reconsideration is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner has any further questions or comments, the Examiner may telephone Applicant's Attorney to reach a prompt disposition of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Michael F. Morano", is written over a horizontal line.

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